

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5358

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY DACCA

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 15654

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA IN

SUBJECT: RELAXATION OF TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

REFS: CALCUTTA 1917; CALCUTTA 2175

1. WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNS THAT THE GOI INTENDS TO LIFT CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS FOR FOREIGN TOURISTS TRAVELING WITHIN THE INNER LINE, TO DATE WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN FROM THE GOI A CLEAR DEFINITION OF THE AREAS FOR WHICH TRAVEL PERMITS ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED. THE NEW INNER LINE DESCRIBED IN DETAIL IN THE OFFICIAL INDIAN GAZETTE IS INCOMPLETE BECAUSE THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS FAILED TO COORDINATE THE DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW LINE WITH THE SURVEY OF INDIA. ADDITIONALLY, THE GOI OFFICE OF TOURISM IS RELUCTANT, OR POSSIBLY UNABLE, TO PROVIDE A LIST OF THOSE ATTRACTIONS WITHIN THE INNER LINE NOW OPENED TO FOREIGN TOURISM WITHOUT PERMITS.

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2. SOME AREAS WHICH ARE NOW FORMALLY AND EXPLICITLY OPEN

STILL REQUIRE THAT VISITORS OBTAIN FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE FROM GOI AGENCIES. LEH, FOR EXAMPLE, IN LADAKH IS "OPEN", BUT THE ABSENCE OF ANY TOURIST ACCOMMODATION OTHER THAN THAT WHICH THE INDIAN ARMY IS ABLE TO PROVIDE NECESSITATES PRIOR GOI AND INDIAN ARMY APPROVAL OF TRAVEL. ACCORDING TO THE MEA, THE GOI HAS DECIDED "IN PRINCIPLE" TO OPEN UP AT LEAST PART OF THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS FOR VISITORS BUT HAS NOT CONCLUDED WHICH PARTS.

3. THEREFORE, WHILE WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE GOI IS DETERMINED TO ENCOURAGE TOURISM TO THESE AREAS TO SIMPLIFY THE BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES, WE INTEND TO CONTINUE TO FORWARD INNER LINE PERMIT APPLICATIONS FOR ALL OFFICIAL AMERICANS AND DEPENDENTS TO THE APPROPRIATE GOI OFFICE AS WE HAVE DONE IN THE PAST UNTIL THIS ISSUE IS RESOLVED. THE ONLY EXCEPTION WILL BE TRAVEL WHICH CONFORMS TO THE GUIDELINES CITED IN THE REFERENCES.MOYNIHAN

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